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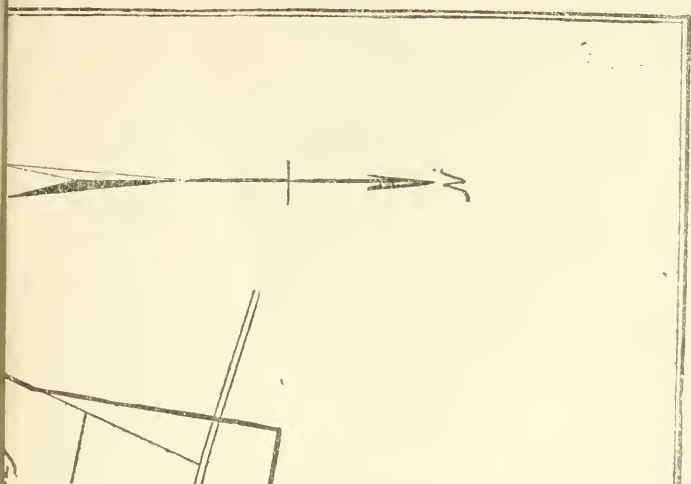
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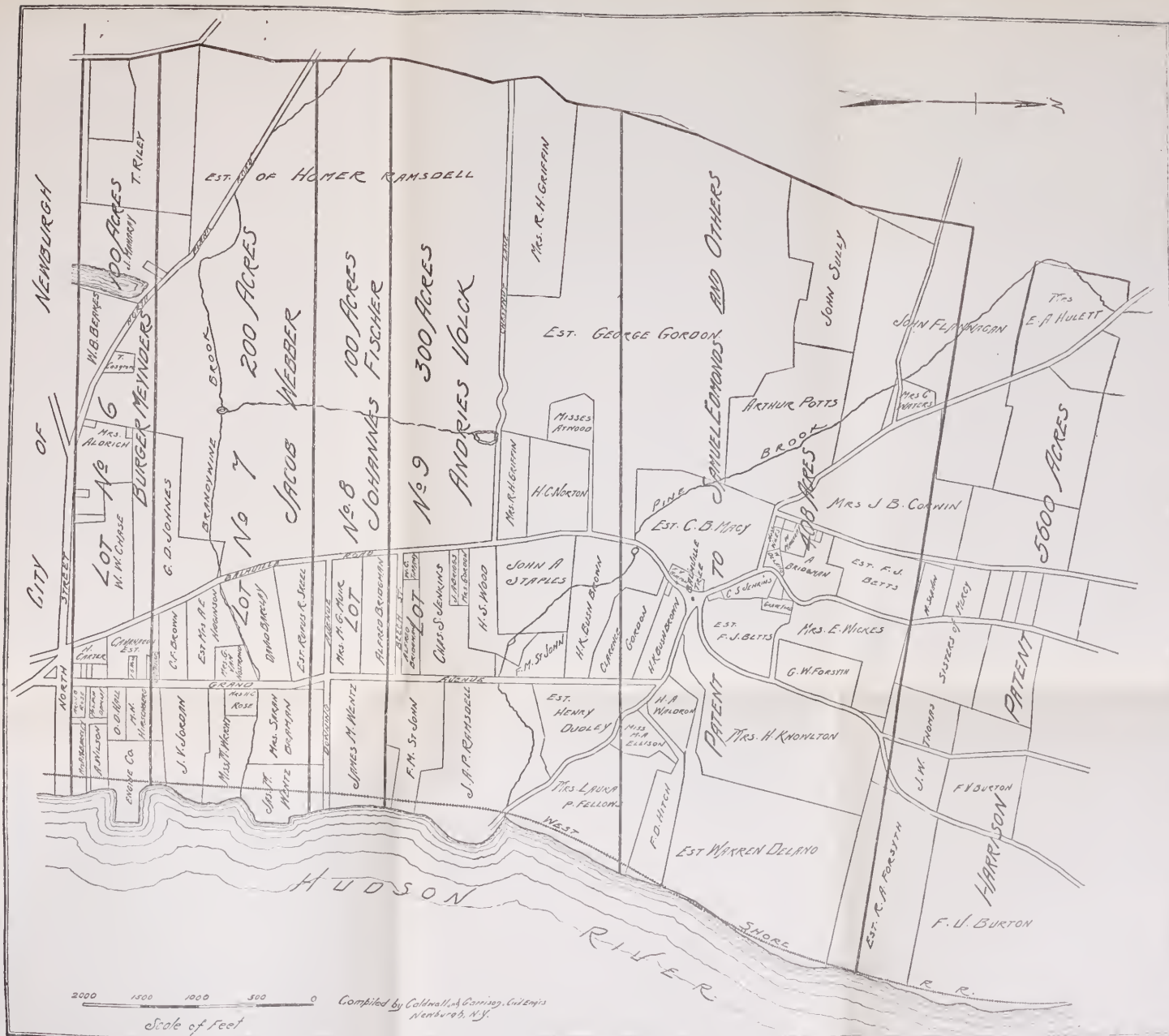
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Balmville.

From the First Settlement to 1860.

BY DAVID BARCLAY.

EARLY HISTORY.

Nearly three centuries ago, when Henry Hudson returned down the river that bears his name, he cast anchor in what is now called Newburgh Bay. Here the famous navigator was detained by boisterous winds, which for a short time prevented his adventuring a passage through the Highlands. While waiting for more favorable weather, he and his officers took note of the surrounding country, and this entry was made September 30, 1609, in the log book or journal of the voyage:

"The thirtieth was fair weather, and the wind at southeast a stiff gale between the mountains. We rode still the afternoon. The people of the country came aboard us, and brought some small skins with them, which we bought for knives and trifles. This is a very pleasant place to build a town on."

Evidently, the explorers were deeply impressed by the beautiful and advantageous situation of the adjacent lands, though the exact location of the place so commended for a town site is of course uncertain.

Almost two hundred years later, the local name of Balmville was given to a tract on the west shore of Newburgh Bay, immediately north of the present City of Newburgh, N. Y. It was so called after the giant poplar tree of the Balm of Gilead species, standing in the old King's highway, now Balmville road, about a mile north of the city. The boundaries of the locality are somewhat indefinite; originally they included only the hamlet in the neighborhood of the tree, but afterwards embraced a larger area. For the purpose of this sketch, they will be considered as including that part of the German patent located north of the City of Newburgh, the patent to Samuel Edmonds and others, and the southeasterly part of the patent to Francis Harrison and company; in all, a tract of about two miles in length from the city northward, and a little over a mile in width from the river westward.

The Waranawangkongs were the Indian proprietors of lands on the west side of the Hudson in this vicinity, and for some distance above and below. They used the Dans Kamer for a place of worship, and were a tribe of the great Leni Lenape confederacy. During the period of the Dutch administration no settlement was made in this immediate locality, the natives remaining in possession until after the English occupation. In 1684, Governor Dongan bought from the Indian proprietors, a tract of land owned by them on the west side of the Hudson, extending from the Paltz south to Haverstraw.¹ An old manuscript states that this purchase was made by the Governor, "for the use of his royal High-

1. Rittenber's History of Orange County and Newburgh, 21.

ness, James, Duke of York and Albany, from the natives at the charge of the revenue of this Colony there belonging to said Duke of York, and had no other inhabitants upon it but the natives, who were then numerous. That by the demise of King Ch. 2nd, and the Duke's accession to the Crown, the same land became invested in the Crown."²

It so remained until 1694, when Captain John Evans, of H. M. Ship Richmond, obtained from Colonel Fletcher, then Governor of this province, a patent for a very large tract on the west shore of the Hudson, extending from Stony Point north to the south line of New Paltz, and westward to the Shawangunk Mountains. The grant included within its bounds two-thirds of Orange County, and parts of Ulster and Rockland Counties, and was estimated to contain about six hundred and fifty thousand acres. The only settlement thereon at the time was that of Major MacGregorie's heirs and followers at Murderer's Creek, in the present towns of Cornwall and New Windsor. The granting of this and other large tracts was afterwards condemned by the Earl of Belmont during his administration, and the patent to Captain Evans was annulled by an Act of the Assembly, which was finally confirmed by the home government. The title then reverted to the crown, and the tract was subsequently granted in smaller parcels to individuals and companies.

The earliest settlement in the vicinity, except Major MacGregorie's already mentioned, was upon the German patent which embraced the present City of Newburgh and the southern part of Balmville, and the patents to Melchoir Gulch and Peter Johnson, located south of the Dans Kamer. These three patents were granted to German Lutherans from the Lower Palatinate on the Rhine, whose country had been devastated by the armies of France, and who were compelled to abandon their possessions, and seek new homes in other lands. A small band of the refugees, accompanied by their minister, Joshua Kockerthal, arrived at London in 1708, and petitioned to be transported to some of Her Majesty's plantations in America. Their petition was referred to the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, who reported: "They are in number forty-one, viz: Ten men, ten women and twenty-one children. That they are very necessitous and in the utmost want, not having anything (but what they get by charity) to subsist themselves. That they have been reduced to this miserable condition by the ravages committed by the French in the Lower Palatinate, where they lost all they had. That they have produced to us several Testimonials from the Bayliffs or Principall Magistrates in the Villages where they dwell, which by the assistance of the Ministers of the Lutheran Church here we have Examined and find that they give a good character of the said minister and the others with him. * * * We humbly propose that they be sent to Settle upon Hudson's River in the Province of New York, where they may be usefull to this Kingdom, particularly in the production of naval Stores and as a frontier against the french and their Indians. * * We further offer, That before their departure they may be made Denizens of this Kingdom, for their greater Encouragement in the Enjoyment of the Privileges accruing by such Letters of Denization."³

Her Majesty's Council approved the report, and ordered them made denizens without fees or charges, which was accordingly done on August

2. N. Y. Colonial MSS., Land Papers, VII, 115.

3. Documentary History of N. Y., III, 511.

25, 1708. Queen Ann also ordered, they should be sent to New York and settled there at "Her own Expenses," and to provide for the subsistence of Joshua Kockerthal, their minister, she recommended a grant to him of a reasonable portion of land for a Glebe, not exceeding five hundred acres, with liberty to sell a part for his maintenance until he should be "in a condition to live by the produce of the remainder." They were also to receive 9d a day per head, during the first year of their residence in New York. Before they set sail, another small party of fourteen refugees from the Palatinate and Holstein reached London, and through Joshua Kockerthal petitioned to be sent to New York with the others. This was granted, and twelve of their number joined the company, the remaining two, it appears, having entered "into the Service of the Lord Lovelace." Arriving at New York in the winter of 1708-9, they were soon afterwards transferred to the tract then called "Quasek Creek and Tanskamir." The exact date of their settlement is unknown, but the Council Minutes indicate that they had located here prior to May 26, 1709.

It was not until ten years later that they finally received a patent. Meanwhile a survey of the lands had been made, and a portion allotted to each. In 1714, they petitioned the Governor, that as the tract was all upland they were unable "to subsist themselves and familys thereon for want of some meadow Land for ffooder for their Cattle in winter," and praying for a grant of unappropriated meadow ground lying about a mile behind their lots.⁴ Again in 1718, through Joshua Kockerthal, they petitioned the Governor for several changes in the proposed grant, among others that the allotments be made to the heads of families, and not to them and their wives and children, on the ground that the latter method might "hereafter be a means of Disturbance and Disagreement in their respective familys with their children."⁵ The request was not granted. During the time that elapsed from the settlement until the patent was issued, Joshua Kockerthal and another member of the company died, and several moved away. Among the latter was Peter Rose, who had been allotted lot No. 6, the first lot north of the present City of Newburgh. He sold to Burger Meynders, a native of Beaverwyck, of Dutch descent, who then resided at Kingston, where he followed the blacksmith's trade. From there Meynders removed to the lot purchased by him in Balmville, and became one of the patentees of the tract.

The patent was at length issued on December 18, 1719. It conveyed 2,190 acres of land, beginning at Quassaick Creek and running north along the river 219 chains to a point on the property now owned by Mrs. Fellows in Balmville; thence in a westerly direction 100 chains, crossing the Balmville road a short distance south of the present residence of Mr. H. K. Bush-Brown and through lands now owned by the heirs of Mr. George Gordon, deceased; thence southerly keeping 100 chains distant from the river to Quassaick Creek, and thence easterly to the place of beginning. The tract was sub-divided into nine lots, containing 1650 acres and a Glebe lot of 500 acres, the remaining 40 acres being reserved for highways. Each lot and the Glebe extended from the river to the west bounds of the patent, and the lots were numbered com-

4. Documentary History of N. Y., III, 573.

5. Documentary History of N. Y., III, 575.

mencing at the south from 1 to 9. The Glebe was located between lots Nos. 5 and 6, and was bounded on the south by the present South Street, and on the north by what is now North Street and the city limits.

The lots were granted as follows: No. 1, by Quassaick Creek, to George Lockstedt and Anna Elizabetha his wife, Margaratha, Anna Sarah and Catharina, their children, 250 acres; No. 2, to Michael Weygand and Anna Catharina his wife, Tobias, George and Anna Maria, their children, 250 acres; No. 3, to Herman Schuneman and Elizabeth his wife, 100 acres; No. 4, to Christian Heinriken, 100 acres; No. 5, to Sybilla Charlotta Kockerthal, widow of Joshua Kockerthal, Christian Joshua, Benigna Sibylla and Susanna Sibylla, their children, 250 acres; No. 6, to Burger Meynders, 100 acres; No. 7, to Jacob Webber and Anna Elizabetha his wife, Eva Maria and Eva Elizabetha, their children, 200 acres; No. 8, to Johannes Fischer and Maria Barbara his wife, 400 acres; No. 9, to Andries Volek and Anna Catharina his wife, George Hieronymus, Maria Barbara and Anna Jertruyd, their children, 300 acres. The Glebe was granted to Andries Volek and Jacob Webber during their lives and to their successors in trust, for the maintenance and support of a Lutheran minister.⁶ Lots Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 9 are situated in what is now called Balmville, the others with the Glebe are contained in the present City of Newburgh. The original owners of the four lots in Balmville did not long remain in possession of their tracts. Burger Meynders sold lot No. 6, to Burroughs Holmes; Jacob Webber sold lot No. 7, August 5, 1724, for 110 pounds, to Zacharias Hoffman; Johannes Fischer and Andries Volek also sold lots Nos. 8 and 9, February 20, 1722, for 130 pounds, to Zacharias Hoffman, who remained the owner of the lots until his death in 1744.⁷

A tract of about 400 acres of land surrounding the Balm of Gilead tree, seems to have remained unconveyed by patent until after the Revolution, though settled upon long before that period. It probably was supposed to have been included in the German patent.

On June 19, 1786, the Surveyor General of New York, issued a certificate of location, which states, that Samuel Edwards, James Demott, Isaac Demott, John Roe, William Bloomer and Eleazer Lucey, under an Act for raising troops for the defence of the State on bounties of unappropriated lands, and an Act for raising troops to complete the Line in the service of the United States, had located, and were entitled to a parcel of land in the precinct of Newburgh, Ulster County: "Beginning at a chestnut tree standing on the west bank of Hudson's River, marked No. 219, being the northeast corner of a tract of land granted to nine German families,"⁸ thence running westerly along the north line of the German patent 100 chains to the northwest corner thereof, thence northerly parallel with the river to the south line of the Harrison patent, thence easterly along its south line to the river, and down along the river to the place of beginning; containing 408 acres. The Surveyor General's certificate shows that the land "was not occupied or improved by any person on or before July 25, 1782," other than Samuel Edmonds, James Demott, Isaac Demott, John Roe, William Bloomer and Eleazer Lucey. A patent for the land was granted to them November 17, 1786.⁹ Their

6. Documentary History of N. Y., III, 578.

8. N. Y. Colonial MSS., Land Papers, XLII, 108.

7. Rittenber's History of Orange Co. and Newburgh, 122.

9. Book of Patents, XIX, 88.



THE BALM OF GILEAD TREE.

names are found in the muster rolls of various regiments of the Militia or the Line, and through their services they were enabled to obtain the above grant. The patent to Francis Harrison and company of 5,600 acres adjoined the patent to Samuel Edmonds and others on the north and west. It was issued July 10, 1714.

Prior to 1798, the territory now embracing the City and Town of Newburgh, was for over a century a portion of Ulster County, which extended south to Murderer's Creek. In that year, the boundaries of Orange County were changed to the present lines.

THE BALM OF GILEAD TREE.

But little is known of the early history of the tree that gave its name to surrounding locality. Several traditions as to its origin are mentioned in Eager's History of Orange County. According to one of these tales, Humphrey Merritt brought it when a small branch from the mountains near New Jersey, at the beginning of or during the Revolution. Another legend asserts that it originated from a riding switch which was stuck in the ground, and there took root. Mr. Eager also gives the statement of Isaac Demott, who over a century ago owned the land where the tree stands. He said that it grew there naturally, and when large enough for a fence rail, he cut and used it for that purpose, and it sprouted again from the stump.¹⁰

The recollections of Mr. James Donnelly in regard to this tree are given in Rittenber's History of Orange County and Newburgh. Mr. Donnelly says that his own observation confirms the statement of Isaac Demott, and that he first saw the tree when he was between eight and nine years old (which must have been about 1782), it was then six or eight inches in diameter with a large spreading top. Mr. Rittenber also cites the evidence of Mr. Gilbert Williams, as tending to show that the tree is much older than the above statements indicate. Mr. Williams said that John Cosman, who was an apprentice to William Bloomer, the blacksmith, before the Revolution, stated that while an apprentice he had often shod horses under the tree, which was then large. Mr. Williams measured the tree in 1832, when its circumference two feet from the ground was fifteen feet and two inches, and in 1868, he found it to be nineteen feet and five inches, showing a growth of four feet and three inches in thirty-six years. From its rate of growth and what he had learned of the tree, he was of the opinion that its age was much greater than that given by the Demott tradition.¹¹

In the old times an extract obtained from the buds was supposed to have considerable medicinal virtues, in the curing of wounds, rheumatism and other ailments. The tree now measures twenty-one feet and eight inches in circumference two feet from the ground, a growth of two feet and three inches in the thirty-two years which have elapsed since the date of Mr. Williams' last measurement. For the past few years it has evinced signs of decay, and has lost some of the immense spreading branches. As the road formerly ran the tree was on the east line, but several years ago Mr. H. K. Bush-Brown, who owns the adjacent land,

10. Eager's History of Orange County, 200.

11. Rittenber's History of Orange County and Newburgh, 182.

added a portion to the highway in such a manner as to bring the location of the tree in the centre of the road.

OLD RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS.

Michael Demott settled in Balmville at an early day. In 1751, with others, he signed a petition praying for a patent to themselves and their successors of the Glebe lands, in order to establish thereon a minister of the Church of England, and a schoolmaster. The Demott family is said to have been of Huguenot ancestry, and Michael, the first of the name to settle here, was perhaps a descendant of Michael Mott, or de Mot, of Kingston, trooper, who in 1664, with several of his company, petitioned for the grant of a valley near that village to be used as a pasture for their horses.¹² During the Revolution and afterwards, Michael Demott kept a tavern which stood near the Balm of Gilead tree. The house it is said was "a small affair." Two of his family were patentees of the tract of 408 acres already mentioned, and they were the owners of a considerable portion of the patent. Part of their land was sold to William Bloomer, but the larger portion became the property of Samuel Ellis. After the death of Ellis, his heirs conveyed by several deeds, 1810-28, to Daniel Wilson, who lived on the south side of Wilson's Lane, east of the present Grand Avenue. His son, Daniel Wilson, Junior, built and occupied the house now owned by Miss Mary A. Ellison.

Nehemiah Denton lived on Lot No. 9, of the German patent. During the Revolution he owned and operated a grist mill on Pine brook, and also conducted a freighting establishment and store at his dock where the brook joins the river. The mill was situated in the glen now owned by Mr. James A. P. Ramsdell, on the north bank of the stream, opposite a pool not far from the river. Traces of the old dam a short distance west of the mill site can still be seen, and two of the millstones are preserved by Mr. Ramsdell near his residence. In addition to supplying the local demand, Denton was also employed in grinding flour for the army. Mr. Donnelly, writing of this time, states: "The hard winter of 1779, made a very deep impression on my mind. We were fourteen days without bread. Owing to the severity of the weather the mills could not run much of the time, and when they did run it was on flour for the army. We had plenty of everything else, but missed the bread. * * * The mills were poor affairs. There were only two, Hasbrouck's and Nehemiah Denton's; the latter on one of the streams north of the village. For forty days that winter the water did not drop from the eaves. It snowed almost every day. We did not see the sun until ten o'clock in the morning, and then it was only visible for a short time and looked as if it was wallowing through a snow bank. The snow was even with the roof of our piazza. Between the war and the weather, we had such times as we would be likely to forget."¹³

William Bloomer resided in Balmville before and after the Revolution. His house, it is said, stood where the residence of Mr. H. K. Bush-Brown now is, and his blacksmith shop nearly opposite the Balm of Gilead tree on the west side of the road. He was born in 1749, and died in the

¹² N. Y. Colonial MSS., Land Papers, L 87.

¹³ Rittenber's History of Orange County and Newburgh, 166.



PINE BROOK.

76th year of his age at the Dans Kamer, where he owned a farm and is buried. From a paper written by him a few years before his death, it appears that when but a lad he was sent to be an apprentice to the blacksmith's trade at Murderer's Creek. Later he set up a shop at Balmville, and at about the close of the Revolution became a member of the Society of Friends. Some of his descendants reside in the neighborhood. His property on the Albany road was afterwards the homestead of Latting Carpenter.

Morris Flewwelling, the owner of part of lot No. 7, was a vestryman of St. George's Church in 1773, and Supervisor of the town in 1776. Captain Coleman of Nantucket purchased from Morris Flewwelling in 1774. He erected a building near where the residence of the late Hon. John W. Brown now is, and used it for his Nantucket trade.

Prior to 1795, Abraham W. Van Denuzern was the owner of a farm of 250 acres, extending from about where the north line of the Powelton farm intersects the Balmville road, south to Downing Avenue and from the river west for over a mile to the patent line, and included also a small tract of 18 acres from Downing Avenue south to the brook, and from Grand Avenue to the river. In that year Van Denuzern sold the farm to Alexander Murray, who afterwards conveyed a portion of it to Samuel Burr. In 1818 Burr sold 83 acres lying east of the Balmville road and north of Downing Avenue, to his son, Samuel Burr, Junior, by whom it was conveyed to George W. McLean, and by McLean, in 1727, to Thomas Powell. The parcel of 18 acres above mentioned, lying south of Downing Avenue, was sold in 1812, by Murray to Isaac Belknap, Junior, who carried on the brick making business there for many years.

After the close of the Revolutionary war, Major Joseph Pettengill, of the Massachusetts Line, located on lot No. 6 of the German patent. He was one of the officers who took leave of General Washington at Fraunce's tavern in New York, December 4, 1783, and is described as "large and rather fine looking, very jocose and pleasant."¹⁴ At the river side near the present engine works, he established a boat landing, from whence was shipped large quantities of ship timber, staves and shingles. There was probably no dock, the vessels being loaded from lighters or scows. The Major died prior to 1800, and left several children. His son Joseph sold a large part of the farm to William Seymour, and in 1804 advertised for sale the homestead lot lying east of the Balmville road as follows:

"To be sold—That valuable lot of land on which the subscriber lives, containing eighteen or twenty acres of land, handsomely situated on the bank of the river about one mile from the Village of Newburgh, on the road leading north. It is well situated for a store or tavern, as the road crosses the high road leading to a thick settled and flourishing country. There are on said farm two good dwelling houses, one where the road crosses and the other on the river, where formerly there has been a landing place and rented last year for 16 pounds; it may with little expense be made a good place of trade. There is on said farm about nine acres of good clover meadow, about 96 bearing apple trees of excellent fruit,

14. Ruttenber's History of Orange County and Newburgh, 180.

and a number of other fruit trees, such as Damsons, English plums, peaches and currants, a beautiful garden plot, a good well by the door, and a living spring on the premises. It is every way agreeable and worthy the attention of any gentleman who wishes to reside in a country seat. If not Sold by the 20th of April to be Let for one year. Any person wishing to purchase may know the terms by applying to the Subscriber, living on the premises, who will give an indisputable title for the same.

Feby. 27, 1804.

JOSEPH PETTENGILL."

Daniel Smith was a merchant at Balmville, and also engaged in freighting from his dock on the river bank south of Pine brook. His store was on the east side of the Albany road where it turns and runs over the hill. The building has been converted into a dwelling, and is still standing. The town records of 1796, describe a district of the road as: "beginning at ye Stone School house, thence southwardly to ye Corner of ye Road (or foot of ye Hill) by Daniel Smith's Store." The stone school house stood on the lot now occupied by the Middle Hope District School building, and was destroyed by fire many years ago.

The Butterworths were an influential family, owning lands and carrying on business in the vicinity of the Balm of Gilead tree during the early part of the century. Henry Butterworth was Captain of a company of artillery, of which Purdy Fowler was 1st Lieutenant, and John Carmon 2nd Lieutenant. The headquarters of the company were one or two buildings called cannon houses on the south side of the highway, west of Butterworth's store, and nearly opposite the present Balmville School house. The company was ordered into active service during the second war with Great Britain, and was on duty at the Staten Island fortifications for the defence of the Narrows. In a general order, dated September 1, 1812, the Commander-in-Chief announced to the several independent companies, one of which was Butterworth's, the high sense he entertained of "their patriotic promptitude in obeying the call of their country" and praised them for their "appearance and behaviour."¹⁵ A number of cannon balls of small calibre found on lands of the late Mr. George Gordon, deceased, were undoubtedly fired by these artillerymen in target practice. Henry Butterworth is buried in the old Balmville grave yard. Caleb Coffin, formerly of Nantucket, was the owner of a farm south of Samuel Burr's land. He sold in 1807, to William Seymour. Coffin was a sloop captain, for sometime in command of the "Belvidere," a packet plying between Newburgh and New York. This vessel is advertised in 1800, as having "large and elegant accommodation for passengers." William Seymour owned several parcels of land in the southern part of Balmville about a century ago. He was a merchant in Newburgh, and engaged in building ships for the Liverpool trade. Thomas Powell became the owner of a large tract, purchasing from the heirs of William Seymour and others. That portion of Mr. Powell's lands situated west of the Balmville road and known as the Powelton farm, is now owned by the children of his daughter, the late Mrs. Frances E. L. Ramsdell. The part lying east of the road extending

15. Military Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins, Governor of N. Y., I. 391.



BRANDYWINE BROOK.

from Brandywine brook to and including lands now owned by Mr. Charles S. Jenkins, was sold by Mr. Powell in several parcels. Other names of old residents and land owners appear on the road lists quoted in subsequent pages.

It was customary in early times, for the owners of live stock to mark them for identification, and their private marks were noted and entered in the town records. The following are samples of these entries:

"1767, Dec. 23d. Humphrey Merrit's. A hole in ye Right Ear, and a happenny under Side of ye left Ear.

"1776, April 3d. Caleb Coffin's. A step taken out of ye fore Side of ye Right Ear, and a Slope off the hinder part of ye left Ear.

"1777, Jan'y. 16th. Stephen Ireland's. A Swallow's Fork in ye Right Ear, and a happenny the under side of ye same, and a happenny the fore side of ye left Ear."

HIGHWAYS.

The Balmville road, formerly called King street or the King's highway, was in the early days of the settlement probably only a trail or at best a rough path through the forest, used by the Palatines and their successors. During the time of the Revolution, it no doubt often resounded to the tread of marching troops and echoed the hoof beats of Washington's horse, as he rode to and from his headquarters, situated on the same road not far below. Even then it could have been only a very primitive sort of a highway, and is described as a road through the woods. Indeed there was little need of a carriage drive, for Mr. Donnelly states in his recollections of this period, that in the Village of Newburgh, three persons owned wagons, a few had ox-carts and "Captain Coleman up at the brook had a Nantucket calash."¹⁶ The town records show that in 1796, Robert Carskaddin was overseer of a district of the road "beginning opposite to William Bloomer's house north of ye Bridge, from thence South to St. George's Church." William Bloomer's residence has been already located, and St. George's was formerly the Palatine Church, the site of which has lately been marked by the Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The following named persons were then assessed for highway taxes on this district of the road: "John Patterson, Stephen Albertson, Joseph Hallett, Daniel Smith, Jr., Silas Coleman, Abraham Van Duzer, Daniel Birdsall, William Jackson, Moses Lyons, George Pettingal, John Chambers, Joseph Pettingal, Thomas Carskaddin, Daniel Kniffen, Richard Hudson, Lemuel Wright, Martin Wygant, Jr., — Oakes and Robert Dolph."

The stream crossing the road at William Bloomer's is named Pine creek on a map of the Palatine tract made by Surveyor General Graham in 1713. It was sometimes called Andries' creek, from Andries Volck, the owner of Lot No. 9, through which it flows, and later was known as Deuton's brook. The stream running through Powelton farm, crossing the road at the foot of the hill and thence through lands of the writer and others, is named on the same map Brandywine creek. Formerly a

¹⁶ Ruttenber's History of Orange County and Newburgh, 171.

dense forest covered the tract through which they flowed, and doubtless the streams were considerably larger than they now are.

A little way northwest from the Balm of Gilead tree, the old road turns north over the hills. The present highway running north from the school house, joins the old road further on. After the Revolution the people would have nothing that reminded them of kings, and so they changed the name of the highway in the village to Liberty Street. In Balmville it became known as the Albany road, and later the Balmville road.

The highway to Fostertown was used in very early times. The road running northeasterly from the tree was opened in comparatively recent years. A road long since closed, led to the river from a point south of and very near William Bloomer's house, and probably joined the road now running to the river, east of the present Grand Avenue. It was a highway of some importance, leading as it did to the docks and freight-houses on the shore, and passing Denton's grist mill. The town records of 1796, describe the road and that to Fostertown as, "beginning at Ellis' Landing, from thence West to Wm. Bloomer's, thence about North West as ye road runs by Daniel Smith's and ye house of James Waring at Fostertown." Reuben Holmes was, during that year, overseer of this district and the following named persons were assessed for highway taxes: "William Johnston, Daniel Aldridge, ——— Phillips, James De Mott, Silas Leonard, Robert Denton, Daniel Smith, Joseph Case, William Smith, James Harris, William Bloomer, John Ward, John Albertson, John De Mott, Samuel Wandle, Caleb Ferris, Mandeville Ducl, Samuel Wandle, Jr., and William Wandle." The western part of the present road from the Balm of Gilead tree to the river, formerly called Wilson's Lane, was opened later by Daniel Wilson, who bought the surrounding lands from the heirs of Samuel Ellis, deceased.

The street extending from the Balmville road to the river and now called Downing Avenue, was named after the late Charles Downing, a noted pomologist, who owned lands to the northward. It has been in use for many years. North Street, though not within the limits of Balmville, bounds it for a considerable distance on the south. This street was used at an early date as a means of access to the river, the easterly end meeting the strand road, which ran northward along the bluffs and to the landing place on the shore, at about where the engine works and docks now are.

The former North Plank road, runs northwesterly from North Street. It was built by a company organized in 1850, and afterwards became a turnpike. Grand Avenue was opened about thirty years ago, at a later period than that described in this sketch.

THE POWELTON HOUSE.

This once noted hostelry stood a short distance northeast of the present Powelton Club House. The entrance to the club grounds was formerly the south gateway of the hotel property. The northernmost part of the building, a low wooden structure with sloping roof, was probably erected

as a farm house. Before its enlargement and conversion into a hotel, it was for many years used as a school. The Newburgh Telegraph of April 17, 1834, contains the following advertisement:

"Boarding school for young Ladies at Powelton on the Hudson River, one mile and a quarter north of the Village of Newburgh, is now open for the reception of boarders and day scholars. S. CURTIS."

Here also taught at subsequent periods, the Revd. S. Irenaeus Prime, Prof. Foote and Mr. Bradford. After the school was discontinued, Mr. Powell, the owner, built large brick additions to the original building, and leased the property for a summer hotel. Before the civil war, it was much frequented by wealthy Southern planters, and was a fashionable resort. The building was destroyed by fire Sept. 19, 1870.

THE OLD POOR HOUSE.

Prior to 1814, there was no permanent home for the poor of the district included in the present City and Town of Newburgh, though a system for aiding and maintaining indigent persons had been in operation for some time, and annual appropriations were made for that purpose. It was voted in 1800, "to hire a house for the poor," and in 1805, that "the Overseers of the Poor be authorized to contract with one or more persons to take the whole of the poor, and put out the children as they shall see best for the town."¹⁷

In 1807, the Overseers bought from William Seymour, ten acres of land, a part of the old Pettingill farm, at the northeast corner of North Street and the Balmville road, where they erected in 1814, the first poor house. The building has been greatly altered and enlarged by the present owner, Mr. Henry Carter. Mr. E. M. Ruttenber's History of Orange County and Newburgh, contains the following statement from an annual report of the Overseers, when this building was used as a poor house.¹⁸

1827. House Expenses.	
Victualing, Clothing, etc.....	\$ 297.71
Wood	81.87
Doctor's bill	63.19
Keeper's wages	50.00
Temporary relief	651.75
	<hr/>
	\$1,144.52
Receipts.	
Tax	\$ 750.00
On hand	385.41½
Fines, etc.....	17.81½
	<hr/>
	\$ 1,153.23

The Orange County poor house was built in 1830, and shortly afterwards the Newburgh poor house property was sold to Mr. Daniel Rogers.

17. Ruttenber's History of Orange County and Newburgh, 220.

18. Ruttenber's History of Orange County and Newburgh.

Later, the present City and Town of Newburgh withdrew from the County system, and erected an Alms House of their own.

INDUSTRIES.

There was a considerable settlement in the neighborhood of the Balmville tree in Revolutionary times. Michael Demott's tavern, Nehemiah Denton's grist mill, and William Bloomer's house and blacksmith shop have been already mentioned. After the war, the business of the place increased, until it rivalled Newburgh as a center for trade and a shipping point on the river. A deed of lands next south of Michael Demott's describes it as a tract "with dwelling houses, mills and other buildings, edifices and shops."

Daniel Smith's store and dock were no doubt well patronized by the surrounding settlers. The river was the main avenue of commerce, and down its waters were carried the products of the country in vessels which returned laden with goods to meet the wants of the inhabitants. The sailing advertisements of two of these vessels are as follows:

"For New York—The Sloop Confidence, John Grigg, Master, Daniel Smith, Owner. Will sail from Smith's Dock for New York on the following Fridays, wind and weather permitting. * * * Daniel Smith is about to erect a Dock to the Channel Bank, which will enable the vessels to go off at any time of tide.

March 12, 1804.

JOHN GRIGG."

"The Well Accommodated Sloop Catharine, William Wandell, Owner and Master. Will sail from Daniel Smith's dock for New York on the following Fridays, wind and weather permitting. * * *

April 2, 1804.

WILLIAM WANDELL."

At about this time Henry Butterworth carried on an extensive business at Balmville, where he kept a store and was engaged in the freighting business from Smith's dock. His store was on the south side of the highway at the foot of the hill nearly opposite Daniel Smith's. It was a general country store, and in it was located the Post Office. In 1812, Henry Butterworth, with Daniel Smith and John I. Caverly, owned the sloop Dread, which sailed from Smith's dock.

There were also two brick yards on the river front. The northernmost belonged to Daniel Gardner and later to Jacob Gillis, who operated it for some time; the other was conducted by Isaac Belknap, Junior, on his lands south of Downing Avenue. The yards were in operation until thirty or forty years ago, and the ruins of the docks connected with them can still be seen.

BALMVILLE FORTY YEARS AGO.

The neighborhood in the vicinity of the river had by this time undergone a notable change. The mercantile and freighting establishments had disappeared, and many residences, surrounded by well kept grounds, replaced the farm houses and roughly tilled fields of former years. At the northwest corner of North Street and the Balmville road was the residence of Mr. T. B. Shelton, formerly the property of Mr. Isaac Carpenter. On the opposite side of the Balmville road and thence eastward to the river, was a tract owned by Mr. Daniel Rogers. Next north was the residence of Mr. Allan M. Sherman, whose lands extended to the river. Adjoining his lands on the north, was the residence of Hon. John W. Brown, who purchased from Mr. Owen McGahey in 1835, and whose property also extended to the river. Mr. Aaron P. Johnes resided opposite. He purchased from Mr. Asa Sterling in 1856. Adjoining Mr. Brown's land on the north, was the property of Mr. David H. Barclay. He bought in 1843, from Mr. David Crawford, who obtained his title from Mr. Thomas Powell. Next north was the residence of Mr. Rufus R. Skeel. He purchased from Mr. Barclay in 1849. West of the Balmville road Mr. Saul had a greenhouse and nursery on a part of the Powelton farm. North of the nursery was the Powelton House. On the east side of the road north of Downing Avenue, was the residence of Mr. Walter S. Vail, who bought from Mr. Charles Downing. The property is now owned by Mrs. Munson G. Muir. Eastward was the residence of Mr. Henry Ball, now owned by Mr. James M. Wentz. Next north of Mr. Vail's property was the home of Mr. Charles Downing, who sold to Mr. Alfred Bridgeman, the present owner. Mr. Benjamin H. Mace's house is now the residence of Mr. Walton C. Tiffany. Mr. William H. Priest resided on the north, and sold in 1863, to Mr. Charles S. Jenkins. Eastwardly was the property of Mr. Daniel B. St. John, who purchased from Mr. Mace. Northward was the farm of Mr. Odell S. Hathaway, extending from the Balmville road to the river. Next north was the residence of Mr. David M. Clarkson. On the opposite side of the road, was the property of Mr. John S. Thayer, now owned by Mr. Henry C. Norton. Westward, was the residence of Mr. John Thayer, owned now by the Misses Atwood. North and west, was the property of Mr. George Gordon. Mr. Henry K. Brown's residence is now owned by Mr. H. K. Bush-Brown. Mr. Brownlee Brown resided on lands now belonging to Mr. Clarence Gordon. Mr. Dailey lived on the west side of the road near the Balm of Gilead tree. North of the road leading to the river was the property of Mr. Warren Delano. Admiral Bell, U. S. N., owned the lands now belonging to Dr. Henry A. Waldron. On the road leading northeast from the Balm of Gilead tree, resided Mr. George A. Elliot, who afterwards sold to Mr. Edward R. Johnes. Opposite was the residence of Mr. Deming, now owned by Mr. George W. Forsyth. Westward, was the residence of Mr. Edwards, formerly of Mr. Frederick J. Betts. Mr. Jonathan W. Thomas resided where he now does. A short distance north on the east side of the road, was the residence of Mr. Josiah H. Burton. Mr. Henry W. Murtfeldt resided where he does now.

North of the tree on property of Mr. Frederick J. Betts, resided Mr. Solomon Watts. On the west side of the Balmville road, where it turns over the hill, west of the tree, was the residence of Mr. Arthur Potts. Mr. John S. Purdy resided northward. Half way up the hill is the old school building. Northerly resided Mr. William C. Wardell, Mr. Christian Cook, Mr. Daniel A. Deyo, Mr. Crary, Mr. Nathaniel T. Hawkins, Mr. Josiah H. Merritt and Mr. Nathaniel Covert. The M. E. Church stood on the east side of the road nearly opposite a road leading westward. The parsonage was a short distance south, on the west side of the road. Mr. Bodine, Mr. Thomas B. Denton and Mr. James Russell resided on the road leading westward. On the road leading west from Balmville hamlet, east of the present school house, was the residence of Mr. J. K. Wiles. Westwardly, resided Mr. John B. Corwin, Mr. Richard Corwin and Mr. John Farnham. On the road running northwestwardly towards Fostertown, resided Mr. Walter Wells, Mr. Reuben H. Bloomer, Mrs. James Lee and Mr. Andrew J. Bloomer. On the road leading north from Mr. Andrew J. Bloomer's, resided Mr. Thomas Kenney, Mr. Samuel McCaw, Mrs. Mary H. Waring, Mr. Daniel Westlake and Mr. Daniel Gardner.

The statement in Joseph Pettengill's advertisement of 1804, that his property, situated at the northeast corner of North Street and the Balmville road, was "worthy the attention of any gentleman who wishes to reside in a country seat," applied equally well to the neighborhood. This fact became fully recognized a half century later, and the rare beauty of the locality attracted thither many people, who selected it as a fair land wherein to dwell.



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